DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 303 546 UD 026 623

TITLE Educating Black Male Youth: A Moral and Civic Imperative. An Introspective Look at Black Male Students in the New Orleans Public Schools.
INSTITUTION Orleans Parish School Board, New Orleans, La.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 57p.; Prepared by the Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools. Some tables and the survey instruments use small print.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Black Students; Dropout Rate; Dropouts; Educational Policy; *Elementary Secondary Education; Enrollment Trends; Equal Education; Expectation; Expulsion; High Risk Students; *Males; Parent Participation; Parent Student Relationship; Policy Formation; *Racial Differences; Role Models; School Community Relationship; Student Promotion; Suspension
IDENTIFIERS *New Orleans Public Schools LA

ABSTRACT

Educating black male youth, especially those in the New Orleans (Louisiana) Public Schools, is a moral and civic imperative. Though black males represented 43 percent of the public school population in the 1986-87 academic year, they accounted for 57.5 percent of the non-promotions, 65 percent of the suspensions, 80 percent of the expulsions, and 45 percent of the dropouts. This report presents the following: (1) a summary analysis of the 1986-87 academic year data (by sex and race) on school enrollment and retention, suspensions and expulsions, and dropouts and achievement; (2) the results of a survey of over 9,250 teachers, parents, and students; and (3) the results of a survey of almost 1,100 members of the community. Subcommittees were developed to address the following issues: (1) the role of expectations on student achievement; (2) social structure variations; (3) community influences and perceptions; and (4) parent influences and responsibilities, and role models and significant others. Recommendations are offered for each of these issues. Data are presented on 18 tables and figures. Appendices list the categories and guiding questions for each of the subcommittees, and present the survey instruments. (BJV)

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Educating Black Male Youth: A Moral and Civic Imperative

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An Introspective Look at Black Male Students in The New Orleans Public Schools

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Educating Black Male Youth: A Moral and Civic Imperative

An Introspective Look at
Black Male Students in
The New Orleans Public Schools

Committee to Study the Status of The Black Male
in the New Orleans Public Schools

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Foreword

Ten months ago a committee was formed by the New Orleans Public Schools to study a critical and sensitive issue — the progress and obstacles facing black male students. Though the group, known as The Committee to Study the Status of The Black Male Student, began its work without a predetermined research plan and without a budget, we are pleased to deliver this comprehensive report to the Orleans Parish School Board and the citizens of New Orleans.

As is usually the case with issues that are often discussed but rarely studied intensively, many of us were well aware of the indicators of the problem, and we were tempted to give our recommendations at the first meeting in August of 1987. However, we believed that our solutions would have lacked the credibility and depth to encourage immediate implementation. Rather than spending a great deal of time analyzing data or talking about the problem, we chose instead to find out what students, teachers and other school personnel, parents and the New Orleans community thought about this issue. Our strategy and our focus have been proactive, and we have obtained potential solutions from a wide audience.

The recommendations of the community appear in the later section under **Public Hearings,** and the final recommendations of the committee appear at the end of the report. However, we hope that you will read the entire report so that you will understand both the seriousness of the issue, as well as the urgency to do something now. The risk and consequences of inaction are too great, and we hope that you share our belief that the education of black male youth in our city and around the country should become a moral and civic imperative.

Antoine M. Garibaldi
Chairman

Members of the Working Committee to Study the Status of The Black Male Student in the New Orleans Public Schools

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Educating Black Male Youth: A Moral and Civic Imperative

A Moral and Civic Imperative

Educating the black male youth of our city, and especially those in the New Orleans Public Schools, must become a moral and civic imperative. This is a matter which we, as citizens, cannot take lightly, for the future economic prosperity of our city and our nearby region will depend largely upon the educational and vocational success of **all** of our young people. But increasing the probability of a life of economic security and the possibility of an intact family for our black male youth will require significantly more efforts. To make this dream a reality, the black male's success in school is critically important and absolutely necessary; but the responsibility goes beyond the school house. It is also a duty that must be shared by parents and the community. Our city must provide a support system to assure that these young men not only have high expectations and succeed academically, but also that they overcome those social obstacles which currently prevent them from becoming productive citizens. This report, therefore, is a call to action!

Like the landmark educational report of 1983, **A Nation at Risk**, this final report of the Committee to Study the Status of The Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools is written as an open letter to the citizens of New Orleans. The committee, initiated at the request of school board member Dr. Dwight McKenna in August of 1987, devoted ten months of intensive study examining the educational performance and progress of black male students in its schools and obtaining perceptions and suggestions from the community and school employees. The working committee of volunteers, primarily school and college educators who were appointed by the Orleans Parish School Board, had as its major goal the task of developing recommendations which would improve the less than satisfactory educational performance of these young men. After numerous days and hours of deliberations, we have heeded that challenge and taken a proactive approach in the development of our solutions, rather than blame the black male for all of his problems.

However, because of the nature of the problems these males experience in our community, you will see that parents, the business community, our political and religious leaders, civic, social and fraternal organizations, as well as the media, are being called upon to help reverse negative trends which ultimately will impact our city's quality of life. **The malady is too grave for a single prescription and the symptoms too widespread for our community to postpone treatment any longer**. We must eliminate the causes and symptoms now to guarantee family stability and high standards of living for all of our youth — this city's future citizens and leaders of the 21st Century.

Why We Must Act Now

The city of New Orleans and its public schools, like other major metropolitan areas, are witnessing a crisis of epidemic proportions with respect to the educational performance, economic productivity, and employability of its black male population. And these symptoms have become too commonplace.

Concern about the future of black males is not limited to our local area. This has become a nationally recognized issue and educational leaders, renowned scholars and prominent syndicated writers have publicly questioned whether the black male is an "endangered species." They have noted specifically high unemployment rates for black males between the ages of 20 to 24; high dropout rates in secondary, as well as elementary schools; and pointed to their obvious absence in colleges and universities throughout this country. Even more, attention has been devoted to the wide gap in college enrollment between black males and females. By way of example, there were 133,000 more black females than males in college in 1985 (591,000 black females versus 458,000 males nationally) and the United States Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that there was an **annual** average of 118,000 more black females than males in college between 1980 and 1985.

Even though college attendance is only one barometer of progression from high school, this same study by the Census and Labor Departments found that 60 percent of the 1,155,000 black high school graduates 20 to 24 years old **who had neither gone to college nor joined the military** as of the Fall of 1986 held jobs. However, 24 percent were unemployed or looking for work and the remaining 16 percent (243,000) of those black high school graduates were completely

outside of the work force, neither working nor looking for a job. We are especially aware of this situation with the high unemployment rate not only in our state, which has had the highest rate among the fifty states, but also in our city.

These national data mirror some of the problems we are facing locally. In New Orleans, fewer black males are graduating from high school and even fewer are going to college. **Though black males represented 43 percent of the public school population in the 1986-87 academic year, they accounted for 57.5% of the non-promotions, 65% of the suspensions, 80% of the expulsions and 45% of the dropout**. Closer inspection of these data on non-promotions (see Table 1) for the 1986-87 school year also show that black males begin to disproportionately (i.e., in proportion to their representation in the school system) experience problems of academic failure as early as the elementary school years and throughout the junior high school years, at rates much higher than their school counterparts. These are grave symptoms of more serious problems that will manifest themselves in different ways (e.g., suspensions, expulsions, dropouts and academic failure) throughout the remainder of their school years. (These other statistics will be discussed in a later section of this report.) For these and other reasons, it is imperative that we act now to remedy the academic and behavioral problems of black male youth, with particular emphasis on raising their self-concepts and self-esteem so that they will succeed in school.

Table 1

1986-87 Non-Promotions by Sex and Race

Grade	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female	Total
1	817	32	48	532	18	23	1470
2	440	23	18	267	8	12	768
3	438	23	11	224	15	5	716
4	351	16	10	194	4	4	579
5	192	15	3	111	8	5	334
6	404	22	7	203	0	0	636
7	756	41	28	412	15	7	1259
8	504	36	15	302	14	8	879
9	513	35	30	385	12	8	983
10	285	17	16	175	9	5	507
11	202	18	12	101	5	9	347
12	125	19	12	101	5	9	271
Total	5027	297	210	3007	113	95	8749
Percent	57.5%	3.4%	2.4%	34.4%	1.3%	1.1%	100.0%

Source: New Orleans Public Schools

The Consequences of Inaction: The Risk is Too Great

Throughout the course of our deliberations, we have often discussed the consequences that might evolve if we decided neither to address nor promptly act on these issues. While many of us see daily the large numbers of school dropouts, unemployed black males, single-parent families and teenage parents, and the preponderance of crime and drugs in our adolescent community, to name just a few problems, we feel that it is extremely important for the community to know both the extent of these problems and also the impact that these factors are having, and will continue to have, on our larger society.

Toward this end, we note a recently published (February 1988) Occasional Paper of the Ford Foundation's Project on Social Welfare and the American Future. The report, **Toward A More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families and Our Economic Future**, was written by Gordon Berlin of Ford and Andrew Sum of Northeastern University and addresses several of the critical issues our committee has been

studying. Their economic analysis primarily shows "how inadequate basic academic skills are intertwined with problems of youth employment and with dropping out of school, out-of-wedlock parenting, welfare dependency, and the decline in work-force productivity growth." Much of the data comes from Census and Labor Department reports, and we cite only a few important highlights that have particular application to black males' economic and family situations.

Between 1959 and 1973, the real median income of black males who were 20 to 24 years old increased by 68%; but from 1973 to 1984 it fell by 44%. **In 1973 the real median income of 20 to 24 year old black males was $10,369; in 1984 the figure in real dollars was $5,768.** (The comparative figures for **all** males were $12,049 and $8,036.)

Today young black males have real incomes one-third less than in 1973.

The proportion of black men with **no reported incomes** has increased dramatically. In **1973, 8%** of black men between the ages of 20 and 24 reported no income. In **1984, 20%** of this group reported no income! (Nationally, there was only a 2% increase—from 5% to 7%—for **all** 20 to 24 year old men who reported no income between 1973 and 1984.)

Among black dropouts in this age group, 14.2% reported no income in 1973, compared to 43% in 1984!

Young black male college graduates increased their real mean earnings 16.3% between 1973 and 1984, compared to a decline of 61.3% for high school dropouts! (The mean incomes of black male high school graduates and those who attended some college declined by almost 51% compared to an average decline of 24% for white males in the same age group between 1973 and 1984.)

Attainment of a high school diploma is an important determinant of earnings. High school graduates with achievement scores in the lower 40 percent earn a little **more** than high school dropouts who score in the higher 40 percent on achievement tests (using the Armed Forces Qualifications Tests and average annual mean earnings between 1978-80.)

The higher the test score in reading, word knowledge and mathematics, the less likely it is that a young person will drop out of school.

In 1973, 60% of **all** men 20 to 24 years old could financially support a family of three above the poverty line. That same year 55% of black men could; but in 1984 only 23% could.

The average male high school dropout (all groups) in 1984 could hardly have been expected to support a family on a mean annual earning of $6,552. (In 1973, the mean earning for a high school dropout was $11,000!)

In 1974, 30% of black men 20 to 24 years old were married and living with spouses, compared to only 9% in 1984. (The comparable figures for white males in this age group living with spouses were 39% in 1974 and 24% in 1984.) Thus, black males are less likely to marry without adequate income and women are less likely to marry them for this same economic reason.

Eighty-five percent of all families headed by a 20 to 24 year old female who dropped out of high school were poor in 1985!

The above compilation of selected statistical highlights from Berlin and Sum's 1988 report clearly indicates that the lack of an adequate and basic education has already had irreparable and multiple economic impacts on the black male and on the future of the black family. It is our firm belief, which is reaffirmed by the Berlin and Sum analyses, that education is still the primary key to improving the self-concept, self-esteem, academic ability and economic opportunities of these young men. We cannot afford to stand by idly and do nothing, for the consequences and risks evidenced by the preceding data will replicate themselves.

Study Procedures

Given the limitation of financial resources, the committee employed a variety of research techniques to obtain data and opinions on the status of the black male student in the New Orleans Public Schools. Brief descriptions of these methodological procedures are presented below.

- Data on the "rates of school retention, suspension, expulsion, school achievement and grade attainment," the first charge of the committee, were compiled by the school system's research and evaluation department.

- Four subcommittees were developed to discuss and address specific issues that could positively influence the success of the black male. These included:

  THE ROLE OF EXPECTATIONS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
  SCHOOL STRUCTURE VARIATIONS
  COMMUNITY INFLUENCES AND PERCEPTIONS
  PARENTAL INFLUENCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES &
  ROLE MODELS AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Samples of preliminary study questions under each of these categories appear in the appendix of the report.

- Surveys of randomly sampled groups of teachers (N=316), parents (N=3523) and students (N=5423) were developed by the committee and administered in February and April of 1988. A non-random, volunteer survey of the community (N=1098) was also developed and administered in early February of 1988.

- Four public hearings were held at different locations around the city in late February and early March to allow individuals in the community to present their opinions, suggestions and recommendations on this issue to the full committee.

The findings from these research data and surveys, the bi-monthly deliberations of the four subcommittees and the results of the public hearings have provided us with useful information to formulate practical and specific recommendations. The following section on **Findings** includes:

- a summary analysis of the 1986-87 academic year data (by gender, sex and race) on school enrollment and retention (see Table 1), suspensions and expulsions, dropouts and achievement; and

- highlights of the results from the teacher, student, parent and community surveys.

Findings

School System Data*

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Registration information provides the most accurate picture on the current distribution of students across the six categories under examination. Registration data from 1986-87 are presented in Table 2. As indicated, black males and black females constitute the two largest single groups. The percentages of each group in the entire school district are presented on the last row in the table. These percentages will serve as a basis for examining and comparing the six categories on the other variables of interest. Figure 1 shows the percentages of each category in relationship to each other.

STUDENT RETENTION

A clear indicator of student progress is promotion from grade to grade. Table 1, in the beginning of the report, presents the number of students not promoted at the end of the 1986-87 school year. The numbers are broken down by race and sex. The table concludes with the total number of non-promotions for all categories and the percentages for each category.

While some student failure is to be expected, there is no reason to expect that the percentage of student failure for a given group would be greater than the proportion of that group in the population. Thus, based on the percentage of black males in the school district, the percentage of black males who fail a grade should be approximately 43 percent. As shown in Table 1 (cited earlier), the failure rate for black males during 1986-87 was almost 58 percent: The percentage of failure for all other categories is less than their proportion of the population.

*Unless otherwise indicated, all tables exclude both Kindergarten and Special Education.

Table 2

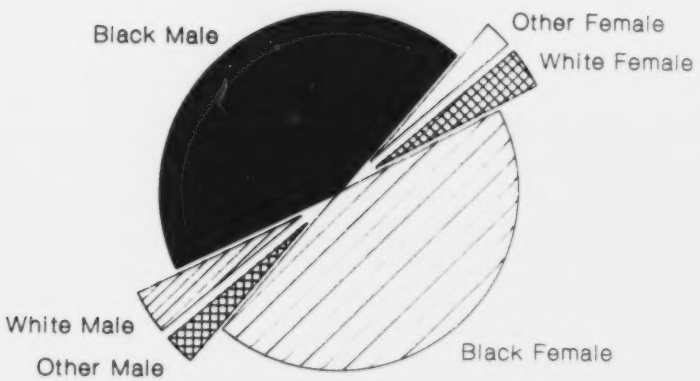
1986-87 Registration by Sex and Race

Grade	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female	Total
1	3671	365	228	3446	336	187	8233
2	3195	303	190	3071	293	169	7221
3	3196	301	216	2939	232	175	7059
4	2886	272	161	2856	231	166	6572
5	2569	235	189	2698	197	167	6055
6	2523	209	137	2545	149	136	5699
7	2627	176	149	2523	168	124	5767
8	2353	204	161	2474	174	146	5512
9	2547	255	168	2610	243	164	5987
10	2145	177	145	2300	216	116	5099
11	1753	197	132	2097	237	144	4560
12	1641	185	127	1866	220	106	4145
Total	31106	2879	2003	31425	2696	1800	71909
Percent	43.3%	4.0%	2.8%	43.7%	3.7%	2.5%	100.0%

Source: New Orleans Public Schools

Figure 1

1986-87 Registration by Race and Sex



Source: 1986-87 Annual Report

SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

The incidence of suspensions in a school district is an indication of the number of disciplinary problems experienced in that district. Ideally, disciplinary problems should not be influenced by the race or sex of the student being disciplined. In reality, discipline is influenced by a variety of factors including the expectations of the teachers and the aspirations of the students and parents. Table 3 and Figure 2 indicate the distribution of suspensions by the race and sex of the student.

Table 3

1986-87 Suspensions by Sex and Race

Grade	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female	Total
1	192	17	2	30	0	0	241
2	312	14	7	56	2	1	392
3	491	25	11	106	4	2	639
4	563	12	12	176	3	2	768
5							
6	992	23	9	439	2	1	1466
7	1383	76	25	740	24	6	2254
8	1047	110	41	556	32	9	1795
9	993	79	21	525	32	3	1653
10	1030	60	16	500	33	5	1644
11	679	38	17	298	26	2	1060
12	482	21	16	196	6	1	722
Total	8164	475	177	3622	164	32	12634
Percent	64.6%	3.8%	1.4%	28.7%	1.3%	0.3%	100.0%

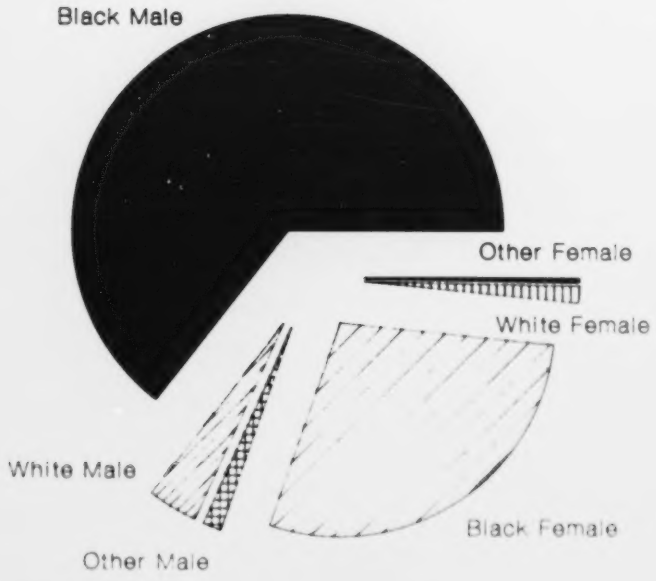
Source: New Orleans Public Schools

Expulsion is the most severe disciplinary penalty exacted by the school district on any student. Table 4 and Figure 3 show the number and percent of students expelled during the 1986-87 school year by race and sex. It would not be unusual for expulsion patterns to be similar to other disciplinary patterns in the school district.

Comparison of Table 3 and Table 4 shows this to be true. Black male students receive the largest number of suspensions and expulsions.

Figure 2

1986-87 Suspensions by Race and Sex



Source: Hearing Office

Table 4

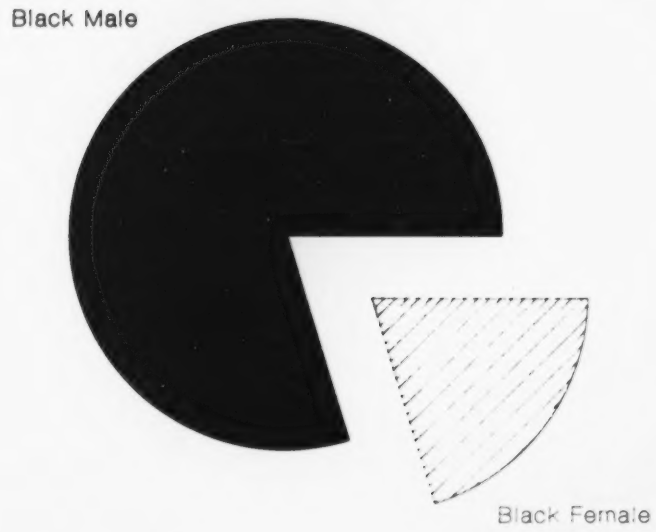
1986-87 Expulsions by Sex and Race

Grade	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female	Total
Total	146	0	0	37	0	0	183
Percent	79.8%	0.0%	0.0%	20.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Source: New Orleans Public Schools

Figure 3

1986-87 Expulsions by Race and Sex



Source: Hearing Office

DROPOUTS

Table 5 and Figure 4 represent the reported dropout figures for the 1986-87 school year. Students who drop out during the summer months are inconsistently reported. Because of the inconsistency, there is a possibility that the numbers are inaccurate. It is likely, however, that the relationships shown would persist if all data were known.

Based on the dropout figures reported in Table 5, the percentage of black male dropouts during 1986-87 is essentially the same as their proportion in the population. In fact, the dropout figures appear to be consistent with the representation of the various categories in the district.

Table 5

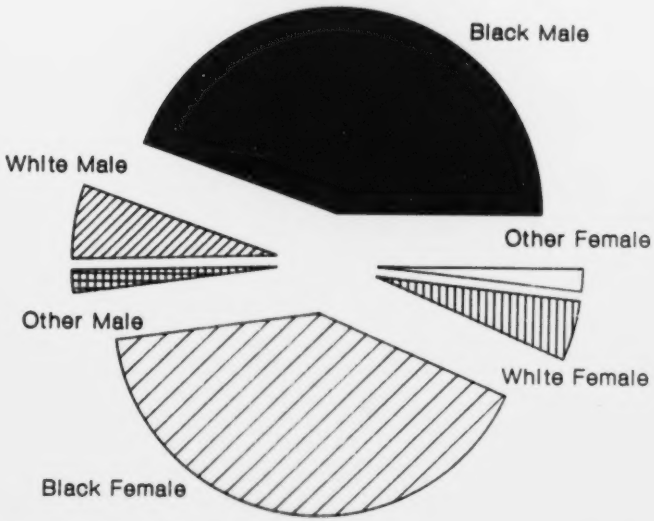
1986-87 Dropouts by Race and Sex and Grade

Grade	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female	Total
1	1	1	1	2	0	0	5
2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
3	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
4	4	0	0	1	1	0	6
5	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
6	2	0	0	3	0	0	5
7	23	3	1	22	7	0	56
8	26	4	0	27	6	2	65
9	125	26	9	109	15	5	289
10	157	10	2	117	12	5	303
11	105	15	3	122	10	4	259
12	77	9	5	82	6	5	184
Total	526	69	21	486	57	21	1180
Percent	44.6%	5.8%	1.8%	41.2%	4.8%	1.8%	100.0%

Source: New Orleans Public Schools

Figure 4

1986-87 Dropouts by Race and Sex



Source: School Social Work Services

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic achievement information is presented in Table 6. The six categories are broken down by quartile band. Under each category the percentage of the group in that quartile band is listed. This table is interpreted differently from previous tables. The expected distribution of test scores would put about 25 percent of each category in every quartile band. In other words, percentages greater or less than 25 indicate an uneven distribution in the category. It should be noted that an uneven distribution which places more students in one of the higher quartile bands (50-74 or 75-99) is not necessarily undesirable.

Table 6 indicates the academic performance for each category. Black males are heavily represented in the lowest quartile in both reading and mathematics. While this is also true for black females, their performance level is consistently better than that of black males. On the positive side, there are quite a few students in all categories who score above the 75th percentile in reading and mathematics. Although these numbers are not up to the 25 percent level, it is evidence of some strong academic performance within every group.

On the surface, the academic performance of white students in the school district is very impressive. Almost 50 percent of the white males and females score above the 75th percentile in reading and mathematics. This is almost double the performance that would normally be expected. A partial explanation for this level of performance could be attributed to the high percentage of white students in limited admission programs based on previous achievement levels. An example of this is the gifted program in the district. Table 7 presents the enrollment data for the 1986-87 gifted program by the race and sex of the participant. The percentage of participation in this program by white students is greater than their proportions in the total population. More indicative of the distribution is the fact that less than 2 percent of black students systemwide are in the gifted program. This contrasts with the greater than 20 percent participation in the gifted programs by white males and females. Participation by other males and females is about 5 percent. Obviously, the relatively high percentage of white students classified as gifted would contribute to their strong academic achievement scores. Table 7 reflects the participation by category of students who are currently in the gifted program.

Table 6

1986-87 CTBS RESULTS - Reading
Distribution by Quartile Band

Percentile Band	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female
1-24	37.4%	10.3%	31.5%	33.7%	8.6%	23.8%
25-49	30.2%	17.2%	31.6%	35.1%	17.7%	33.3%
50-74	19.8%	24.1%	21.7%	15.6%	23.6%	26.0%
75-99	12.6%	48.5%	15.2%	16.0%	50.1%	16.9%
Number	31214	2877	1707	29555	2747	1554

Table 6A

1986-87 CTBS RESULTS - Mathematics
Distribution by Quartile Band

Percentile Band	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female
1-24	31.7%	9.7%	14.1%	27.1%	7.5%	10.8%
25-49	30.3%	14.8%	18.8%	30.0%	15.5%	19.6%
50-74	20.3%	21.0%	23.7%	22.5%	20.5%	29.9%
75-99	17.6%	54.5%	43.6%	20.3%	56.5%	44.7%
Number	30182	2841	1703	31337	2656	1561

Source: New Orleans Public Schools

Table 7

1986-87 Gifted Participation by Race and Sex

	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female	Total
N	482	625	98	589	640	86	2520
Percent	19.1%	24.8%	3.9%	23.4%	25.4%	3.4%	100.0%

Source: New Orleans Public Schools

Summary

The academic achievement information on black males is as disheartening as the suspension and failure rate (see Table 8). As a group, black males outnumber all others in number and percent of

students scoring in the lowest quartile in reading and math. Even though nearly 13 percent of black males scored in the highest quartile in reading and 17 percent attained that same level in math, the participation by black males (and all minorities) in the gifted program is profoundly unrepresentative of black males in the district.

Based on the information presented, there are several obvious problem areas for black male students. One that emerges as needing immediate attention is the failure rate for black male students. As previously stated, some failure rate is inevitable. The failure rate for the school district last year was approximately 10 percent. The failure rate for black male students was 16 percent. Of the students who failed, 60 percent of them were black males. The severity of the problem is most evident at the middle/junior level, where a variety of discipline, academic, and social factors are causing adverse influences on student achievement. Black males in grades 7, 8, and 9 are failing at a rate above 20 percent. Of particular concern are black males in seventh grade who are failing at an astounding rate of 28 percent.

Table 8

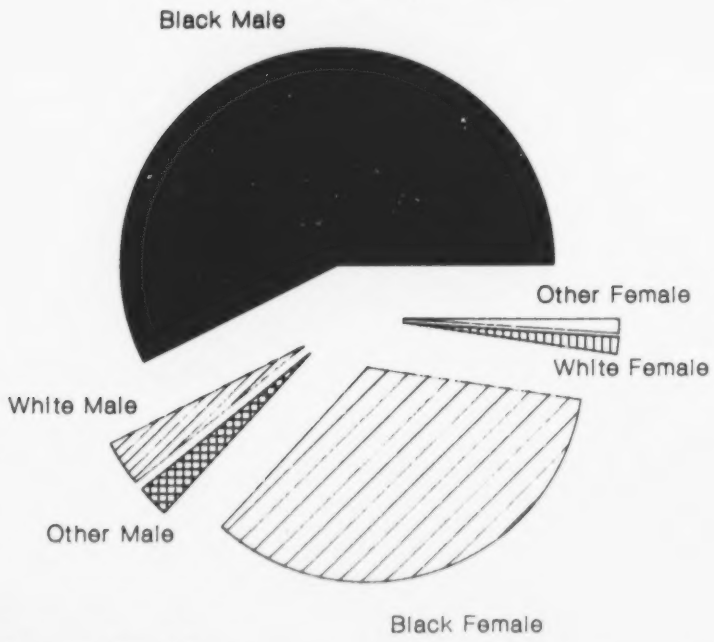
1986-87 Summary Table

	Black Male	White Male	Other Male	Black Female	White Female	Other Female
Registration	43.3%	4.0%	2.8%	43.7%	3.7%	2.5%
Non-Promotions	57.5%	3.4%	2.4%	34.4%	1.3%	1.1%
Suspensions	64.6%	3.8%	1.4%	28.7%	1.3%	0.3%
Expulsions	79.8%	0.0%	0.0%	20.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Dropouts	44.6%	5.8%	1.8%	41.2%	4.8%	1.8%
Lowest Quartile-Reading	37.4%	10.3%	31.5%	33.7%	8.6%	23.8%
Lowest Quartile-Math	31.7%	9.7%	14.1%	27.1%	7.5%	10.8%
Highest Quartile-Reading	12.6%	48.5%	15.2%	16.0%	50.1%	16.9%
Highest Quartile-Math	17.6%	54.5%	43.6%	20.3%	56.5%	44.7%
Gifted Enrollment	19.1%	24.8%	3.9%	23.4%	25.4%	3.4%

Source: New Orleans Public Schools

Figure 5

1986-87 Non-Promotions by Race and Sex



Source: 1986-87 Annual Report

Teacher Survey

A randomly selected group of teachers was administered a 12-item questionnaire focusing on their perceptions of the black male students whom they taught. Teachers responded on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Four teachers were randomly selected from each of the system's 125 schools and sent a survey with accompanying instructions. (The

surveys were transmitted through the principal of each school, with a cover letter signed by the deputy superintendent and the study's research committee.) A response rate of 66% was obtained (318 of 500 teachers). To preserve confidentiality, teachers were asked to return their questionnaires in specially made "drop boxes" which had been prepared for each of the system's schools. As Table 9 indicates, the demographic breakdown by race and gender is a close approximation to the school system's teaching population. Of particular note is the fact that almost 60 percent of the respondents teach in elementary schools and 70 percent have 10 or more years of experience. Information on age also indicates that almost 40 percent are 41 or over and 45 percent are between 31 and 40 years of age, thus suggesting a veteran teaching group.

The findings indicate that:

> Almost 9 of every 10 teachers expect their black male students to succeed; but almost 6 of every 10 believe that their black male students have positive attitudes about school and value education for its significance to their future.
>
> While 16% of the teachers believe that most black male students they teach will drop out before completing high school, a startling 56%—almost 6 of every 10—do not expect these students to attend college.

Recognizing that only about one-third of all high school graduates attend college, the above finding is very alarming because almost 60 percent of our sample are elementary school teachers and another 16% middle/junior high school teachers! (These percentages could even be higher since almost 9% of our sample did not indicate their current grade level.) The early grades are the years in which high expectations should be encouraged for all students and especially black male students. This is a notable finding which we will address in our recommendations and which is also related to the student findings.

Table 9

TEACHER OPINION SURVEY RESULTS

FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE
IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Number of Respondents = 318

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1. I expect most black male students I teach to succeed academically.	43.4	45.3	9.1	1.9
2. Most black male students' attitudes toward school are positive.	9.4	46.5	37.4	5.7
3. Most black male students I teach exhibit independent work habits.	9.1	44.7	36.8	8.2
4. Most black male students I teach concentrate on the task.	6.9	46.5	41.2	3.5
5. Most black male students I teach exhibit socially appropriate behavior in the classroom.	15.4	54.4	21.1	7.2
6. Most black male students I teach accept responsibility for their behavior.	11.6	50.6	25.5	9.7
7. Most black male students I teach are able to predict the consequences of their misbehavior.	15.7	60.7	19.8	3.5
8. Most black male students I teach will drop out before completing high school.	3.8	11.9	57.9	24.5
9. I feel that most black male students I teach value education for its significance to their future.	11.9	43.1	31.8	11.0
10. I feel that most black male students I teach equate education to a way of obtaining a future job.	17.9	49.4	23.9	6.6
11. I expect most black male students I teach to attend college.	8.8	33.6	45.0	11.3
12. I feel that parents of most black male students I teach expect them to succeed in school.	23.6	59.7	11.6	3.5

Age	Percent	Race	Percent	Sex	Percent
20-30	5.3	Black	65.4	Male	14.8
31-40	45.0	White	22.0		
41-50	30.2	Hispanic	0.3	Female	73.9
51-60	6.9	Asian	0.3		
60+	1.6	Other	9.4		

School Type	Percent	Years of Experience	Percent
Elementary	59.4	0 - 3	8.2
Middle/Junior	16.0	4 - 6	6.6
Senior	15.7	7 - 9	8.8
		10+	70.1

Student Survey

A 15-item questionnaire was administered to students by the randomly selected teachers who were asked to participate in the study. While we do not have any conclusive means of estimating exactly how many students there were in each of the 318 teachers' classrooms, we can assume that our response rate on the student survey ranges between 60 and 70 percent. (Each teacher was sent 30 student surveys at the time each received his/her questionnaire.) The questionnaire took barely 10 minutes to complete and asked students attitudinal questions about their schooling. Respondents were almost equally divided by gender and closely reflected the racial composition of the school system. More than 65 percent of the total group are in grades 5 through 7 and also 12 years and under.

Two tables are provided on this questionnaire. One (Table 10) gives the summary results for all respondents and the other (Table 11) provides percentages of agreement by black male, black female, non-black male and non-black female. Highlights from the second table (Table 11) show that:

- Almost 30 percent of black males (and also non-black males) said they disrupted classroom teaching and learning.
- Ninety-five percent of black males expect to graduate from high school, but 7% believe there is a strong possibility they may drop out of school.
- Eighty-five percent believed that they should take full advantage of all that school has to offer.
- **And all students believed that teachers should push them harder, with black males and females having the highest agreement percentages (almost 60%).**

These results strongly indicate that many students should have higher expectations and teachers should demand more of them, especially black males. In addition, more than a third of all students said that their teachers did not set high goals for them (item 3). Overall, a range of 20 to 30 percent of black male students are not doing their best in school, do not enjoy doing homework and are not making positive contributions to classroom activities. Though those

Table 10

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY RESULTS

FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Number of Respondents = 5423

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1. Getting a good education is important to me.	83.7	14.5	0.3	0.6
2. My teachers expect me to do good work.	58.9	37.6	1.6	0.7
3. When compared to other students, my teachers set high goals for me.	26.1	38.4	23.8	9.8
4. I do not disrupt classroom teaching and learning.	34.4	38.6	16.3	8.8
5. I misbehave in class because my teacher lets me.	5.4	4.5	20.5	68.4
6. The grades I get are the grades I earn.	63.9	26.1	4.7	3.8
7. To do well in school, my teachers should push me harder than they do.	28.6	28.8	23.7	17.6
8. I enjoy doing my homework.	30.2	41.3	15.3	11.6
9. I should take advantage of all that school has to offer me.	52.5	30.1	9.1	6.8
10. I do my best in school everyday.	43.2	39.6	13.0	2.7
11. I make many positive contributions to classroom activities.	35.4	49.4	10.8	2.6
12. I will graduate from high school.	79.2	15.4	2.1	1.8
13. Parents do not understand what school is all about.	10.2	9.7	21.2	57.2
14. I think there is a strong possibility that I may drop out of school.	3.4	2.3	12.9	79.8
15. I would seek help from school personnel to prevent me from dropping out of school.	58.7	23.2	6.5	9.9

Sex	Percent	Race	Percent
Male	48.2	Black	83.6
		White	7.9
Female	48.5	Asian	1.3
		Hispanic	1.9
		Other	2.3

	Under 10	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	17+
Age	5.1	19.3	24.7	14.3	7.0	5.1	4.7	5.0	3.8	9.0

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Grade	1.5	27.7	25.6	14.0	11.8	1.5	3.7	8.1	3.9

Table 11

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY RESULTS

FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Number of Respondents = 5423

ITEMS	N=2258 BLACK MALE	N=2236 BLACK FEMALE	N=372 NON-BLACK MALE	N=380 NON-BLACK FEMALE
1. Getting a good education is important to me.	99.0	99.4	98.4	99.0
2. My teachers expect me to do good work.	97.5	97.7	95.1	97.9
3. When compared to other students, my teachers set high goals for me.	63.2	66.4	67.7	68.9
4. I do not disrupt classroom teaching and learning.	69.7	76.4	70.9	85.8
5. I misbehave in class because my teacher lets me.	10.4	9.6	9.6	4.8
6. The grades I get are the grades I earn.	89.8	91.5	90.9	95.2
7. To do well in school, my teachers should push me harder than they do.	60.8	57.8	47.3	48.5
8. I enjoy doing my homework.	68.2	78.8	54.3	71.6
9. I should take advantage of all that school has to offer me.	85.6	80.9	85.4	82.6
10. I do my best in school everyday.	81.1	87.0	75.8	87.8
11. I make many positive contributions to classroom activities.	83.3	87.8	85.0	86.3
12. I will graduate from high school.	95.0	95.7	94.6	98.5
13. Parents do not understand what school is all about.	21.6	19.2	19.4	16.9
14. I think there is a strong possibility that I may drop out of school.	7.1	3.8	6.5	4.2
15. I would seek help from school personnel to prevent me from dropping out of school.	83.1	83.2	83.4	77.4

Sex	Percent	Race	Percent
Male	48.2	Black	83.6
		White	7.9
Female	48.5	Asian	1.3
		Hispanic	1.9
		Other	2.3

	Under 10	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	17+
Age	5.1	19.3	24.7	14.3	7.0	5.1	4.7	5.0	3.8	9.0

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Grade	1.5	27.7	25.6	14.0	11.8	1.5	3.7	8.1	3.9

percentages are low, they are extremely significant given the young ages and middle grade levels of our sample. These responses, particularly by male students, may be a prophetic call to teachers and parents to set higher goals and expectations for them. As national studies on dropouts have shown (Rumberger, 1987), dissatisfaction and disinterest in school are the major causes for dropping out by black male students, followed closely by suspensions and expulsions! We may be able to prevent this from happening if we respond quickly to those symptoms of disinterest, disruption and disciplinary referrals.

Parent Survey

Parents of students who participated in the survey were also asked to complete a 17-item questionnaire, half of which focused on school matters and the remainder relating to parental expectations and duties at home. A total of 3523 parents (73.4% females and 16.4% males) responded. Almost 4 of every 10 had at least one child in school and at least 6 of every 10 had at least two children in school.

The results indicate that:

More than 8 of every 10 believed that their sons expect that they will go to college.

Nine of every 10 had gone to school for a report card conference.

And, almost 25% had not been to the school for parental conferences.

Not surprisingly, most of the parents reported that they considered themselves to be good parents and expected their children to perform household chores. There were also no significantly different expectations for their sons and daughters with respect to being home at a certain time. There are no startling findings here except perhaps for the first item regarding their sons' expectations for college. Whether this finding reflects the expectations of the parents or the male children, it is consistent with our previous results related to the need for higher goals and expectations on the part of both students and teachers.

Table 12

PARENT OPINION SURVEY RESULTS

FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Number of Respondents = 3523

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1. I feel my son expects to go to college.	50.5	34.1	5.9	1.7
2. I think I have a good relationship with my children.	68.6	29.2	1.1	0.4
3. I feel I am a good parent.	70.7	27.7	0.6	0.3
4. I am involved with the PTO/PTA organization.	12.9	35.1	40.1	7.0
5. I have attended a school open house.	41.2	41.0	13.7	2.1
6. I have been to the school for a report card conference.	56.4	33.5	6.9	1.8
7. I have been to the school for parental conferences.	38.4	33.2	16.6	8.3
8. I have been to school just to visit the classroom.	28.6	35.9	26.1	6.0
9. I think I spend ample amounts of time with my children.	57.5	36.0	4.0	0.7
10. I think my home provides an adequate place/space for home study.	58.9	35.8	3.0	0.9
11. I help my children with homework.	58.6	35.8	3.2	0.9
12. I expect my son to be home at a certain time.	68.9	19.9	2.0	1.0
13. I expect my daughter to be home at a certain time.	69.2	17.7	1.5	1.0
14. There is a specified time for my children to be in bed.	54.6	34.5	7.9	1.6
15. I enforce a time limit for watching TV for my children.	41.5	40.4	13.7	3.0
16. My children are expected to assist with chores.	61.9	31.2	4.2	1.2
17. My children are assigned chores.	52.9	28.9	6.0	1.4

18. Do you work?	Percent			
	Yes	57.6	No	34.9

Sex	Percent	Race	Percent
Male	16.4	Black	76.8
		White	7.8
Female	73.4	Asian	3.9
		Hispanic	1.6

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
Boys in School	0.1	38.9	22.7	8.2	2.2	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Girls in School	0.2	39.6	23.0	8.5	2.9	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1
Number of Boys		32.9	26.7	11.5	4.6	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Number of Girls	0.1	34.4	25.6	13.2	5.2	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.1

Community Survey

To obtain an assessment of citizens' attitudes on the public school system and also their perceptions on black male students in the city, a 33-item questionnaire was developed by the committee. This survey of the community was the first questionnaire administered by the committee in early February. Because it was not financially possible to conduct a more scientific survey of the community through a random telephone poll, the committee resorted to placing more than 40,000 questionnaires in the local daily newspaper and two black-owned papers (one weekly and one monthly). Surveys were randomly placed in some of the newspapers, and citizens were asked to complete them. Respondents could either return them to the specially-prepared "drop boxes" in schools or other locations (e.g., City Hall, the central public library, Chamber of Commerce, telephone company, etc.), where there were also surveys available, or mail them to the school system at an address placed at the bottom of the questionnaire. Almost one-fourth of the completed surveys were mailed to the school system location and the remainder were deposited in the locked "drop boxes."

Since this was a volunteer survey, the interpretation of the results must therefore be qualified. Almost 1100 surveys were received. More than half (53.2%) of the respondents had school-aged children, but only 35 percent had children in the public schools. (Totals do not add up to 100% because all individuals did not supply complete demographic information.) Slightly more than half of the respondents indicated that they were black (56.6%), and a third were white (32.8%); 55.6% were female, and 36.1% were male. These demographic characteristics should be kept in mind when reviewing the percentages in Table 13. Results from the survey, which are overwhelmingly positive, are highlighted below.

- Almost 90% of the respondents indicated that they were willing to help public education.

- While 72% felt that the system did not use its money efficiently, 75% believed that the system needed more money to improve education. Almost 65% indicated that they were willing to increase property taxes for education, a fact borne out by the passage of an April 1988 millage election. (The survey was administered in February of 1988.).

Table 13

COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY RESULTS

FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Number of Respondents = 1098

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1. The present system of operation uses school monies to the best interest of the more than 84,000 students.	4.0	20.2	39.5	32.7
2. I am willing to share with the present administration ways and means our system can best gain more positive support from the general public and others.	37.5	51.8	4.6	2.6
3. I am willing to join in an effort to improve public education and its public image.	48.0	44.2	3.3	2.1
4. I am aware of the superintendent's 5-year plan.	17.9	42.6	22.7	10.3
5. I believe the 5-year plan of the Superintendent has made or will make a major impact on public education.	8.3	32.6	28.9	11.3
6. If I were given the choice of sending my child to public or private school, I would send him her to a public school.	16.5	20.4	25.5	35.1
7. I get most of my information about public schools from the newspaper, radio or television.	20.2	41.8	21.4	13.3
8. I think more money is needed to improve our present public school system.	51.2	24.4	10.6	12.1
9. I would be willing to support increased property taxes for public education.	36.4	28.9	12.9	20.0
10. I would support a reduction in homestead exemption from $75,000 to $50,000 for education.	34.9	31.9	11.6	18.9
11. I would support a reduction in homestead exemption from $75,000 to $25,000 for education.	18.6	19.1	27.0	32.2
12. I would be in favor of various types of financial support for education.	39.1	44.9	6.9	6.3
13. I think overall teacher morale is poor.	40.8	39.1	14.3	4.1
14. I feel that the responsibility of the media to building the image of public schools is very important.	41.4	38.1	11.1	7.4
15. Various media sources have positively affected my perceptions of the public schools.	10.7	32.2	38.9	14.8

ITEMS	A	B	C	D	F
16. What grade would you give to most teachers in the public school?	9.5	28.7	40.7	12.7	5.4
17. What grade would you give to most principals in the public schools?	6.2	22.1	41.4	17.2	9.9
18. What grade would you give to the Superintendent of Schools and his top administrators?	6.5	23.2	31.0	20.7	15.7
19. What grade would you give to the members of the Orleans Parish School Board?	2.3	13.6	34.4	26.2	21.1

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
20. I think our newly elected Governor will be able to do a great deal to help public education before his term expires.	11.5	40.1	29.8	13.8
21. In our system, which is 87% black, I think white teachers are just as committed to black children as they would be to white children in a predominately white system.	17.3	40.3	24.0	15.9
22. In our system, which is 87% black, I think black teachers are just as committed to white children as they are to black children in a predominately black system.	16.6	54.3	18.8	7.8
23. I think the amount of paper work and other duties teachers must handle interfere with the quality of classroom instruction.	36.8	34.3	18.5	8.1
24. I think the community has a role to play in demanding the highest expectations for student achievement.	69.6	26.5	1.8	0.9
25. Black male students in this community are as concerned about getting an education as other students.	16.5	30.8	33.3	17.1
26. Black male students are as capable of intellectual achievement as other students.	53.6	38.5	4.0	2.8
27. Black male students in this community are mostly troublemakers.	6.1	13.0	46.0	32.0
28. Most of the black male students in this community are in special education classes.	3.2	10.9	50.2	28.2
29. On the job, the black male student is offered the same position as his peers with similar qualifications.	6.1	25.4	34.4	29.5
30. The teachers of N O P S. have a different set of standards for black male students than for their peers.	9.0	25.8	38.7	20.0
31. Black male students in this community are not as educated as their peers.	18.4	47.0	23.1	7.5
32. Teachers in the N O P S. expect less of their black male students than they do of their other students.	11.0	27.6	33.9	21.8
33. More black male teachers would make a significant difference in the success of the black male student in the N O P S.	34.5	33.6	18.6	10.0

Age	Percent	Race	Percent	Sex	Percent
20-30	12.2	Black	56.6	Male	36.1
31-40	39.1	White	32.8	Female	55.6
41-50	24.2	Hispanic	0.4		
51-60	9.0	Asian	0.3		
60+	8.2	Other	1.5		

	Yes	No
School Age Children	53.2	39.8
Children Attend Public Schools	35.0	41.1

Prepared by
Dept. of Educational Accountability
3/88

Almost 8 of every 10 respondents felt that teacher morale was low and that the media had an important responsibility in building the image of public schools.

Recognizing that only about 36 percent of the respondents said they would send their children to public schools over private schools if given the choice, between 60 and 70 percent felt that teachers, principals and the superintendent deserved "grades" of C or higher for their performance. About 50 percent of these respondents gave school board members "grades" of C or higher.

More than 95% felt that the community has a role to play in demanding the highest expectations for student achievement and 75% felt that the amount of paperwork which teachers had to do interfered with their classroom instruction.

With respect to black males (items 25 through 33), more than 90% of the community respondents believe that black male students were as capable of intellectual achievements as other students, and 78% did not believe that black male students were mostly troublemakers.

However, 78% believed that most black male students in this community were in special education classes, and 65% felt that they were not as educated as their peers. And almost 65% did not believe that black males were offered the same kinds of employment positions as their peers with similar qualifications.

More than 65% of the respondents did not feel that teachers had a different set of standards nor expectations for black male students than their peers.

Finally, 68% felt that more black male teachers would make a significant difference in the success of black male students in the New Orleans Public Schools.

Even with the earlier qualifications that this was a volunteer sample of respondents, the mostly positive results indicate a concern for the public schools and black male students. They believe that black male students are capable of good work and are not troublemakers, but suggest that higher expectations and more male teachers would help to improve their academic success, self-concept and self-esteem.

Public Hearings

Four public hearings were held at four of the system's high schools in late February and early March of 1988. The sites selected were chosen because they were located in four geographically distinct areas in the city. Thus, any individuals who wished to present testimony and recommendations to the committee at these meetings did not have to travel too far from their neighborhoods. Notices of these meetings were advertised in the newspaper.

All of these two-hour meetings were audio-taped (and two were also video-taped) and averaged about twenty-five persons. While written transcripts are available, several of the recommendations made by these concerned individuals are summarized below. To help guide the reader, these suggestions have been paraphrased and grouped into four related categories:

Social Development of Black Males;
Curricula/Academic Processes;
Administrative Practices; and
Community Involvement.

■ Social Development of Black Males

Black male students should be taught values, etiquette and morality at school and in the home. The importance of these should be discussed often while also communicating the consequences of inappropriate behavior in and out of school.

Students should be taught to resist peer pressure and how to be nonconformists.

Schools should host and offer lectures and programs on values, self-concept and self-esteem.

All high school students should engage in a prescribed number of hours of community service in various settings.

Students should be taught how to market themselves.

■ Curricula/Academic Processes

Teachers should explain to students (preferably in writing) why they take required courses so that they will understand their applicability to the real world.

Because reading has been shown to be directly related to high self-concept, enrichment activities in reading and language arts should be developed for black male students whose communication skills are low.

Black male students should be strongly encouraged to participate in more extra-curricular and after-school activities that are related to academics or leadership (e.g., academic clubs, yearbook, debate team, student council, band, and so forth). All male students are not athletic!

Students who perform well academically should also receive tangible rewards (i.e., letter jackets, sweaters, etc.) and recognition comparable to athletes and band/chorus members.

More classes in vocational education, which students can use as electives, should be offered by schools.

Teachers should use more diverse instructional practices in recognition of the different ability levels of pupils.

The statement on the elementary report card relating to a student's self-concept should be eliminated.

- Administrative Practices

  Because of the predominance of black male students in special education classes, parents and school officials should closely monitor all placements.

  Report cards should be sent out more often during the school year.

  Counselors should serve more children with special problems.

  More black male teachers should be hired and teacher aides should be placed in more classes because of high teacher-student ratios.

  Parents of secondary school students should be made to feel more "welcome" at junior and senior high schools. (Some parents believe that their involvement with their children is solicited more at the elementary level than at the secondary level.)

- Community Involvement

  University students, especially black males, should be encouraged to perform community service at local elementary and secondary schools (e.g., as tutors, aides, speakers, assistants to extracurricular sponsors, etc.).

  Local schools should develop regular and on-going programs with business, in addition to adopt-a-school models. One strategy that has proven to be effective at historically black colleges is the Youth Motivation Task Force, whereby business persons come to the schools to speak about their professions. This program should include skilled craftsmen such as electricians, plumbers, mechanics and so forth.

Committee Recommendations

In this section we provide what we believe is the most important aspect of this report, namely, the committee's recommendations. While our suggested actions are by no means all-inclusive, we have prioritized those which each of the four subcommittees considered to be the most important. Many of the recommendations are familiar, practical and, for the most part, easy to implement. They are based on our deliberations, the results of the surveys, what we heard at the public hearings and what we know about the current educational performance of all students, and especially black males, in our school system. This increasingly important issue, however, will only be solved if the entire community recognizes that the educational and social development of black male youth is a moral and civic imperative. All segments of the community, therefore, have meaningful roles to play.

Teacher Recommendations From Subcommittee on Expectations

- All employees, present and future, should be required to participate in a free, semester-long in-service course that focuses on racism in America and its negative effects on all Americans. Such a course

will allow school personnel to understand how they have internalized racism, even if in its most subtle forms. The intent of this recommendation is to assist all school-wide personnel in developing appropriate and positive methods which should behaviorally change their interactions with black males and all students.

- Teachers should strongly encourage students in the earliest grades to attend college or to pursue post-secondary training. This can be accomplished through visitations to college or vocational/trade schools, career day programs, guest speakers representing white- and blue-collar careers, as well as through career-oriented volunteer programs.
- The school system should develop effective and alternative disciplinary programs and practices in place of systemwide suspension and expulsion procedures. These may take the form of short term crisis-intervention programs or in-school suspension models that have proven to be educationally and behaviorally successful in other school districts.
- Teachers should encourage more active involvement by parents in the education of their children. This objective can be accomplished through frequent phone calls, weekly progress reports, participation in learning activities by classroom volunteers, homework instruction sheets, and assistance in formulating plans for supplemental and enrichment activities. The school system should develop an effective model for these activities to facilitate their implementation.

Student Recommendations From Subcommittee on Expectations

- Students should be discouraged from dropping out of school through programs which emphasize: (a) the positive aspects of staying in school, such as career opportunities; (b) tangible benefits, i.e., financial rewards; (c) intangible benefits, i.e., contributions to race, the community and society; and (d) the negative effects of not staying in school, i.e., lack of financial security, unemployment or family instability.

- All students at the middle/junior and senior high school levels should be required to participate in a six-week mini-course that covers the following topics:

  resume development
  interview techniques
  appropriate dress for job interviews
  appropriate on-the-job behavior
  parenting skills
  child care skills
  stress management skills
  budgeting skills
  family-life skills

  If a mini-course is not possible, many of the above topics can be neatly integrated into the content of related subjects which students are required to take, e.g., English/Language Arts (resume development and interview skills), Social Studies (family-life skills) or Mathematics (budgeting skills).

- Students and teachers at the middle/junior and senior high school levels should organize and participate in school-based forums to develop better communication patterns between them. Possible areas of discussion might center around the school's goals and objectives, as well as the role of the teacher in meeting those objectives.

- Students should be taught appropriate social behaviors and etiquette in a variety of settings, e.g., play skills, effective communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), good sportsmanship and coping skills.

Recommendations From Subcommittee on School Structure Variations

- More male elementary teachers must be hired, especially in grades K through 3. The school system should seriously consider the possibility of hiring male teacher aides at these grade levels as a short-term intervention strategy.

- Full-time counselors should be hired for elementary schools. Peer counselor programs, using students in junior and senior high schools, should be developed to de-emphasize the negative impact which peer pressure has on black males' academic performance and success.
- Pupil-teacher ratios should be reduced at all grade levels, e.g., K - 3 (18:1 ratio); 4 - 6 (22:1 ratio); and 7 -12 (not to exceed 150 students per day).
- Male students should be required to participate in extra co-curricular activities which are not related to athletics. Male students should be required to participate especially in student government and student monitoring programs, as well as assume roles of leadership and responsibility at school sites, e.g., patrol boys.
- The organizational structure of school levels should be standardized, with preference given to a K - 5, 6 - 8, and 9 - 12 arrangement. This structure will help to minimize the number of age/grade transitions students must make, keep them with peers of similar ages and also synchronize the policies on grading and attendance for students in junior high or middle schools.
- Teachers, with the assistance of principals, instructional specialists and other central office adminstrators, should:

  make homework mandatory;

  give cumulative course tests, where 90% of the test is based on the current quarter's instruction and 10% on the previous quarter's work;

  observe other teachers at their school, as well as at other sites, to learn about teaching methods that are different from their own;

  provide study skills development classes to teach students how to prepare for instruction and how to practice what they have learned;

  develop departmental examinations in subject areas, especially at the elementary level, based on a standard curriculum; and,

  place maximum emphasis on rewarding academic achievement. **(Schools should award sweaters, jackets, tee shirts,**

and cloth "Letters" recognizing "Academic All Americans.")

A variety of pilot programs are recommended by the subcommittee. Some of these experimental programs might be initiated in individual schools within the system.

An all male magnet school at the elementary or secondary level, or a pilot program where students are separated by sex in certain classes up to the fourth grade;

A pilot program where school uniforms are required; (Such a program at the elementary level, for example, would reduce clothing expenses, de-emphasize the "designer syndrome" and decrease perceptions of inferiority or poverty.)

A pilot program where year-round school arrangements have been developed;

Before and after school use of buildings for community projects and activities related to education (e.g., tutoring or enrichment); and,

A full-time, on-site intervention program for at-risk students.

- Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Programs should be required for all children entering elementary schools in the state of Louisiana.

Recommendations From Subcommittee on Community Influences and Perceptions

- Businesses in the community should become more supportive of parents and allow for release or compensatory time so that they can visit the school for report cards and meetings with teachers. Parents should also be allowed to come to school one day a year to visit their children's classrooms. This can be most effective in the early grades.

- More black male teachers, especially in the lower grades, and more black male social workers should be hired to work with young black males. From pre-kindergarten through high school, these male youth will have the opportunity to be exposed to positive role models who are like themselves. Their identification with these and other male role models should improve their self-images.
- Teachers should exhibit the proper behaviors of role models by speaking standard English, being more cognizant of how children express themselves verbally and behaviorally, and by allowing students to express themselves without fear of intimidation and belittlement, especially in the early formative years.
- Various segments of the community, such as the media, business persons, religious leaders, public servants, senior citizens, retired professionals, skilled craftsmen, social and civic organizations and college students (especially black males) should volunteer to assist local schools on a **regular and on-going** basis as tutors, speakers, resource persons and counselors. These individuals and groups should discuss such topics as values, work ethic, the importance of strong family bonds, child rearing and the appreciation of culture and the arts.
- A course of study on Black History and Culture, as well as the contributions made by Black Americans to this country and to the world, should be incorporated into the staff development program of the New Orleans Public Schools. This should be a required in-service course for all new teachers.

Recommendations From the Subcommittee on Parental Responsibilities

- Parents must be made aware of the importance of teaching their boys the value of an education at teacher conferences and through school forums. They should also actively support their male children's interests to obtain further education and training beyond high school. Special academic assistance should be given to teenage parents and those who have not completed their education. This

might be done in the evening at several school sites where child care and homework assistance are available to the children of these parents.

- Parents should become active participants in the education of their children by:
  - visiting the school frequently during nine week report periods; and,
  - assuring that their children are in school daily, that they are prepared to perform fully and that they will abide by school rules and regulations.
- Parents must be trained to become an active political group who can assist educators in the school system in providing a superior education for their children. Parent Effectiveness Training should be developed and organized by the school system to facilitate that process.
- The school system should change its policy regarding parental visits so that parents will be able to regularly monitor the educational progress of their children.
- Parents should encourage their male children to participate in more and varied extra-curricular activities. They should also carefully monitor their children's use of free time (especially radio listening and television viewing) as well as their out-of-school activities. They should demand that homework and other assigned school projects are completed prior to children participating in after-school leisure activities.
- To strengthen partnerships between the school and the home, teachers and parents should foster and nurture relationships and lines of communication which are collaborative rather than adversarial.
- Businesses should provide rewards and incentives (e.g., summer jobs, tangible forms of recognition, etc.) to the children of their employees who maintain above average grades, attend school daily and who participate in extra-curricular activities. These types of reinforcements will not only encourage parents to promote their children's education but also help students to excel in school.

References

Berlin, Gordon and Sum, Andrew. (1988). *Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families and Our Economic Future.* New York: Ford Foundation (Project on Social Welfare and the American Future).

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Subcommittee Categories and Guiding Questions

Factors Influencing the Success of Black Male Students

SUBCOMMITTEE ONE

- **The Role of Expectations on Student Achievement**

  How do the academic expectations of teaching personnel, parents, the community, and students themselves influence student achievement?

  What does the research on expectations and achievement motivation tell us about these influences on black students' academic progress, learning styles and behavior in schools?

  What kinds of positive initiatives can be implemented immediately in our local schools?

- **The Role of Student Involvement and After-School Leisure Activities**

  To what extent are male students involved in extra- and co-curricular activities? And, in what types of activities (athletics, band, school clubs, etc.)?

  What role does student involvement play in the lives of successful black male students?

SUBCOMMITTEE TWO

- **School Structure Variations**

  What effects do the organizational structures of schools have on achievement and the school/social behaviors of students? (Why are some schools "more effective" than others? Why do some schools have higher suspension/expulsion/dropout rates than others? Does school size have an effect?)

Can structural reforms (e.g., shifts in the distribution of resources, varied student/teacher ratios, supplemental academic programs to help low-income students) improve student success?

Should more attention be devoted to the differential learning styles of black children as noted by researchers?

What impact does the leadership of administrators have on student success, as well as on teacher morale and expectations?

SUBCOMMITTEE THREE

- **Community Influences and Perceptions**

  How do the attitudes and perceptions of the community (i.e., the general public, businesses, churches, civic groups and organizations, the media and other external agencies) influence the quality of education, students' success and aspirations, and teacher morale?

  What kinds of responsibilities should individuals, groups and organizations assume, separately and collectively, to improve the image of local schools?

  How can they raise the aspirations and expectations of students?

- **Overcoming the "Outcome Deficit" Syndrome**

  What can be done to counter the hopeless belief of many male students that educational attainment will lead to unemployment and limited career opportunities anyway?

  How can businesses and the community change this reality and those beliefs?

- **After School Leisure Activities**

  How can after-school activities (leisure and educational) at school and church sites, community centers, playgrounds, etc., be organized to complement daily learning? Is this an avenue for bringing male students in contact with other role models?

SUBCOMMITTEE FOUR

- **Parental Influences and Responsibilities**
  - How do parents' child rearing practices affect students' early educational development in the schools?
  - What does current research tell us about different child rearing practices for black males?
  - What role must parents play in the educational process while their children are in school?
  - What special efforts must be developed to help single parent families to become more involved with the schools?
  - Is there a role here for the community—civic organizations, businesses, churches, the media—that might make parental responsibility more attainable?
- **Role Models and Significant Others**
  - What effect does the absence of male role models as teachers, in the home and in the community have on the self-concepts, self-esteem and values of black males?
  - Who are the role models/significant others of **black male students who do succeed** in school?
  - What can teachers and administrators do to raise the self-concept, self-esteem and values of black males?

TEACHER OPINION SURVEY
FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE
IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. It is one of four surveys prepared by the Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools. Our purpose is to examine the attitudes and influences of teachers on the quality of education in the New Orleans Public Schools. This important survey includes questions that focus on your perceptions of the academic success of black male students. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your assistance is important to the success of this project.

A full report with recommendations will be submitted to the school system by the end of this school year.

Indicate your opinion by circling one of the following. *SA = Strongly Agree* *A = Agree* *D = Disagree* *SD = Strongly Disagree*

1	I expect most black male students I teach to succeed academically	SA A D SD
2	Most black male students' attitudes toward school are positive	SA A D SD
3	Most black male students I teach exhibit independent work habits	SA A D SD
4	Most black male students I teach concentrate on the task	SA A D SD
5	Most black students I teach exhibit socially appropriate behavior in the classroom	SA A D SD
6	Most black male students I teach accept responsibility for their behavior	SA A D SD
7	Most black male students I teach are able to predict the consequences of their misbehavior	SA A D SD
8	Most black male students I teach will drop out before completing high school	SA A D SD
9	I feel that most black male students I teach value education for its significance to their future	SA A D SD
10	I feel that most black male students I teach equate education to a way of obtaining a future job	SA A D SD
11	I expect most black male students I teach to attend college	SA A D SD
12	I feel that parents of most black male students I teach expect them to succeed in school	SA A D SD

The following questions are optional. Your cooperation in answering them is greatly appreciated. Circle the response that best describes you.

Age 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61+

Race Black White Hispanic Asian Other

Sex Male Female

Type of School Elementary Middle/Junior Senior

Years of Teaching Experience 0-3 4-6 7-9 10+

Please offer one immediate recommendation that will enhance the success of black males in the New Orleans Public Schools.

_____

_____

_____

Comments _____

_____

_____

Please seal the survey in an envelope and place it in the specially marked Black Male Study box in the school office by February 12, 1988.

For information contact: Johnny Jones at 483-6386 or 483-6387

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY
FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. It is one of four surveys prepared by the Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools. Our purpose is to examine the attitudes and influences of students on the quality of education in the New Orleans Public Schools. This important survey includes questions that focus on your perceptions of the academic success of black male students. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your assistance is important to the success of this project.

A full report with recommendations will be submitted to the school system by the end of this school year.

Indicate your opinion by circling one of the following. *SA = Strongly Agree* *A = Agree* *D = Disagree* *SD = Strongly Disagree*

1.	Getting a good education is important to me	SA A D SD
2.	My teachers expect me to do good work	SA A D SD
3.	When compared to other students, my teachers set high goals for me	SA A D SD
4.	I do not disrupt classroom teaching and learning	SA A D SD
5.	I misbehave in class because my teacher lets me	SA A D SD
6.	The grades I get are the grades I earn	SA A D SD
7.	To do well in school, my teachers should push me harder than they do	SA A D SD
8.	I enjoy doing my homework	SA A D SD
9.	I should take advantage of all that school has to offer me	SA A D SD
10.	I do my best in school everyday	SA A D SD
11.	I make many positive contributions to classroom activities	SA A D SD
12.	I will graduate from high school	SA A D SD
13.	Parents do not understand what school is all about	SA A D SD
14.	I think there is a strong possibility that I may drop out of school	SA A D SD
15.	I would seek help from school personnel to prevent me from dropping out of school	SA A D SD

We are interested in knowing what you expect from a high school education. Please take a few minutes to write your expectations.

_____

_____

What is/are the most important thing(s) you must do to assure that you will graduate from high school? _____

_____

Please complete or check each of the following items that best describes you.

☐ Male ☐ Female Grade _____ Age _____ ☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian Other _____

Comments _____

_____

_____

Please return this survey to your homeroom teacher by February 12, 1988.

PARENT OPINION SURVEY
FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE
IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. It is one of four surveys prepared by the Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools. Our purpose is to examine the attitudes and influences of parents on the quality of education in the New Orleans Public Schools. This important survey includes questions that focus on your perceptions of the academic success of black male students. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your assistance is important to the success of this project.

A full report with recommendations will be submitted to the school system by the end of this school year.

Indicate your opinion by circling one of the following *SA - Strongly Agree* *A - Agree* *D - Disagree* *SD - Strongly Disagree*

1	I feel my son expects to go to college	SA	A	D	SD
2	I think I have a good relationship with my children	SA	A	D	SD
3	I feel I am a good parent	SA	A	D	SD
4	I am involved with the PTO/PTA organization	SA	A	D	SD
5	I have attended a school Open House	SA	A	D	SD
6	I have been to the school for a report card conference	SA	A	D	SD
7	I have been to the school for parental conferences	SA	A	D	SD
8	I have been to school just to visit the classroom	SA	A	D	SD
9	I think I spend ample amounts of time with my children	SA	A	D	SD
10	I think my home provides an adequate place/space for home study	SA	A	D	SD
11	I help my children with homework	SA	A	D	SD
12	I expect my son to be home at a certain time	SA	A	D	SD
13	I expect my daughter to be home at a certain time	SA	A	D	SD
14	There is a specified time for my children to be in bed	SA	A	D	SD
15	I enforce a time limit for watching TV for my children	SA	A	D	SD
16	My children are expected to assist with chores	SA	A	D	SD
17	My children are assigned chores	SA	A	D	SD
18	Do you work? Yes No				

The following questions are optional. Your cooperation in answering is greatly appreciated. Circle the response that best describes you.

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian Other _____

Sex and number of children in school: Boys _____ Girls _____

How many children do you have? Boys _____ Girls _____

Comments _____

_____

_____

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY TO THE SCHOOL BY FEBRUARY 24, 1988

For information contact: Johnny Jones at 483-6386 or 483-6387

COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY
FOR THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE STATUS OF THE BLACK MALE IN THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. It is one of three surveys that have been prepared by the Committee to Study the Status of the Black Male in the New Orleans Public Schools to examine the perceptions and influences of the community on the quality of education in the New Orleans Public Schools. This important survey which we would like for you to complete includes questions that focus on your overall evaluation of the school system as well as your perceptions on the academic success of black male students. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your assistance is important to the success of this project.

A full report with recommendations will be submitted to the school system by the end of this school year.

Indicate your opinion by circling one of the following — *SA: Strongly Agree* — *A: Agree* — *D: Disagree* — *SD: Strongly Disagree*

1. The present system of operation uses school monies to the best interest of the more than 84,000 students. SA A D SD
2. I am willing to share with the present administration ways and means our system can best gain more positive support from the general public and others. SA A D SD
3. I am willing to join in an effort to improve public education and its public image. SA A D SD
4. I am aware of the Superintendent's 5 year Plan. SA A D SD
5. I believe the 5 Year Plan of the Superintendent has made or will make a major impact on public education. SA A D SD
6. If I were given the choice of sending my child to public or private school, I would send him/her to a public school. SA A D SD
7. I get most of my information about public schools from the newspaper, radio or television. SA A D SD
8. I think more money is needed to improve our present public school system. SA A D SD
9. I would be willing to support increased property taxes for public education. SA A D SD
10. I would support a reduction in homestead exemption from $7,500 to $6,000 for education. SA A D SD
11. I would support a reduction in homestead exemption from $7,500 to $5,000 for education. SA A D SD
12. I would be in favor of various types of financial support for education. SA A D SD
13. I think overall teacher morale is good. SA A D SD
14. I feel that the responsibility of the media to building the image of public schools is very important. SA A D SD
15. Various media sources have positively affected my perceptions of the public schools. SA A D SD
16. What grade would you give to most teachers in the public schools? A B C D F
17. What grade would you give to most principals in the public schools? A B C D F
18. What grade would you give to the Superintendent of Schools and his top administrators? A B C D F
19. What grade would you give to the members of the Orleans Parish School Board? A B C D F
20. I think our newly elected Governor will be able to do a great deal to help public education before his term expires. SA A D SD
21. In our system, which is 87% black, I think white teachers are just as committed to black children as they would be to white children in a predominantly white system. SA A D SD
22. In our system, which is 87% black, I think black teachers are just as committed to white children as they are to black children in a predominantly black system. SA A D SD
23. I think the amount of paperwork and other duties teachers must handle interfere with the quality of classroom instruction. SA A D SD
24. I think the community has a role to play in demanding the highest expectations for student achievement. SA A D SD
25. Black male students in this community are as concerned about getting an education as other students. SA A D SD
26. Black male students are as capable of intellectual achievement as other students. SA A D SD
27. Black male students in this community are mostly trouble makers. SA A D SD
28. Most of the black male students in this community are in special education classes. SA A D SD
29. On the job the black male student is on the same position as his peers with similar qualifications. SA A D SD
30. The teachers in N.O.P.S. have a different set of standards for black male students than for their peers. SA A D SD
31. Black male students in this community are not as educated as their peers. SA A D SD
32. Teachers in the N.O.P.S. expect less of their black male students than they do of their other students. SA A D SD
33. More black male teachers would make a significant difference in the success of the black male student in the N.O.P.S. SA A D SD

The following questions are optional. Circle the response that best describes you.

Age: 20-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-

Race: Black | White | Hispanic | Asian | Other

Sex: Male | Female

Do you have school aged children? Yes No

Do your children attend public schools? Yes No

Comments

Return this questionnaire to any one of the following locations on or before February 12, 1988.

- Any New Orleans Public School
- New Orleans Public Schools Administrative Centers
  4100 Touro St. 4300 Almonaster Ave. 703 Carondelet St. 5931 Milne Blvd. 1815 St. Claude Ave. 1619 Leonidas St.
- The Chamber/New Orleans and The River Region, 301 Camp St.
- New Orleans Public Service Inc., 317 Baronne St.
- South Central Bell Telephone Co., 500 Baronne St.
- New Orleans Public Library, Main Branch, 219 Loyola Ave.
- City Hall Reception Area, 1300 Perdido St.
- Metropolitan Area Committee, FNBC Building, 210 Baronne St., Suite 1148.

or mail to: Black Male Study
Social Studies Department
Lakeview Administrative Center
5931 Milne Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70124

For information contact: Johnny Jones, New Orleans Public Schools, 483-6386 or 483-6387.

Acknowledgment of Other Advisory Members

Over the course of our study, a number of individuals assisted us at various times. We would like to acknowledge those individuals for their assistance and contributions: Bennie Adams (Southern University); Maryland Chenier (New Orleans Public Schools); James A. Gray, III (Attorney); Alfred Gourrier (New Orleans Public Schools); Morris F.X. Jeff, Jr. (New Orleans Department of Welfare); Nathaniel LaCour (United Teachers of New Orleans); Louis Miron (Loyola University); Everett J. Williams (Superintendent, New Orleans Public Schools); Louaunne Williams (New Orleans Public Schools). We also thank the many individuals in the school system who assisted us with the preparation, delivery and analysis of the school surveys.

We would also like to give special acknowledgment to Mrs. Linda Verneuil of the New Orleans Public Schools, and secretary to Mr. John A. Jones, Jr., who had the demanding tasks of typing, telephoning and sending out notices to committee members, as well as duplicating and collating materials for our deliberations. We thank her and also Wanda Parker, secretary to Dr. Garibaldi, for their special assistance and valuable contributions.

The members of the Orleans Parish School Board when this study was completed were: Gail M. Glapion, President; Dwight L. McKenna, M.D., Vice-President; Pres Kabacoff, Harwood "Woody" Koppel, and Rose M. Loving.

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